

Mary Thompson

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Mother of three children

Half-day kindergarten is not a half-day it is 2 ½ hours of school - preschool is three hours
why not extend kindergarten 30 minutes or one hour to make it a true half day program
preschoolers receive 9 hours of instruction a week
kindergarteners receive 12 ½ hours of instruction a week

Research and Studies show the following are negatives to full-day kindergarten

- Not developmentally appropriate.
- Too much curriculum material is taught that is more appropriate for 1st grade.
- More formal instruction over longer time periods, which are inappropriate for the age.

Every other day kindergarten program-which is the half day program

Principal referred to this class as an accelerated program

- kids home with parents every other day
- enter school way above the full day kindergarten kids
- end of the year almost evens out but the full day students still fall short

More expensive in staff, equipment, space, and students

- schools in Helena are so overcrowded now-Jim Darcy was completely full by Jan 4th
- so many schools bus kids clear across town to the overflow schools
- bus siblings even if school has an opening
- some schools are so crowded that you may never attend your neighborhood school

Focuses on academics too much.-if you bombard kids with too much academics at this early age
some may end up hating school

- it is too much, too early for five year old
- kids need to be five, they need to play they don't need to be sitting in school all day long

Full-day kindergarten funding will eliminate half-day program in most school districts.

There will be no half day program anywhere in Helena told to me by the assistant superintendent

- Linda McCulloch always reassures the public that the choice of full-day, half-day or no kindergarten is always the choice of the parent
- many parents will have no choice

- Kindergarten aged children in rural districts may be away from home for up to 9 hours a day

Linda McCulloch also states that transitions between home, school and daycare throughout the day is very stressful on the kids and the parents

- how many parents finish work for the day at 3:00?

-kids will still have to be transported to child care at 11:00 or 3:00

Transitions between

- home to full-day kindergarten and preschool to full day kindergarten is more traumatic
- than transitioning from half-day kindergarten to full-day 1st grade

Research shows

- Benefits of full-day kindergarten programs are clear at the end of kindergarten and into 1st grade, but largely evaporate by 3rd grade.
- Gains by at-risk kids in full-day kindergarten are lost at the end of 1st grade.
- Second grade teacher at a school that offered a half-day and a full-day K program.
- Once students reached 2nd grade observed no difference between students in either program.
- Brightest students attended half-day program

Research and Studies that support all-day kindergarten have largely taken place in southern states where they deal with larger numbers of minorities and higher poverty levels.

Currently only 10 states offer full-day kindergarten. 40 states do not.

A house member recently emailed me and made this statement.

Currently, kindergarten students who attend all-day only receive half funding, which means other school programs are being short-changed.

Parents main concern for benefits of full-day kindergarten is not academic improvement but savings in child-care expenses and inconveniences.